

REMARKS

This Amendment A and Response is directed to the Office Action mailed on December 18, 2003. There is currently one claim pending in the application. Claim 1 stands rejected as indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and as anticipated by Kim et al. Applicants thank the Examiner for his thoughtful review of this application.

I. Indefiniteness Rejections

As a preliminary matter, Claim 1 is canceled herein and rewritten in Jepson form, which is believed to better emphasize the claimed aspects of the claimed invention that are novel and clearly distinct from the claimed invention in applicants' issued patents, U.S. Patent No. 6,546,066 and U.S. Patent No. 6,618,460. In particular, the novel aspects of the missile shield assembly are emphasized in the rewritten claim. In addition, a separate independent claim directed solely to the novel aspects of the missile shield assembly is also added. Both of these independent claims, and their dependent claims, are believed to be fully supported by the disclosure of the present application and distinguishable over the prior art.

Regarding the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, in rewriting the claims, the language objected to has been omitted. More specifically, all usage of "adapted to" has been eliminated from the claims, "lower ring beam" has been changed to simply "ring beam," and the term "near" has been omitted (along with any reference to the ducts). The undersigned appreciates the Examiner's helpful comments.

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II. Anticipation Rejection

The claims, as amended herein, more specifically claim a missile shield structure having a plurality of shield plates that are slidably retained in a horizontal array directly over the reactor vessel closure head. The shield plate assembly is fully disclosed in the present application. For example, see FIGURE 19 and the related disclosure beginning at page 19.

The closest prior art known to applicants is U.S. Patent No. 4,302,290 to Mazur et al. (cited by the Examiner in the parent Application No. 10/012,193). Mazur et al. discloses a head equipment support structure (HESS) (10) having multiple decks (14) that are arranged in a vertical orientation with respect to each other (FIGURE 1 shows "upper deck" and "lower deck"). The multiple decks are not slidable, but rather are integral with the HESS: "These steel plates would be designed to form an integral part of the HESS 10 so as to be movable as a unit therewith." (See Col. 13, lines 61-64.)

All of the claims pending in the present application after entry of the amendments proposed herein include limitations that the shield plates are slidably retained and in a horizontal array over the reactor. The claims are therefore believed to be quite distinct from the apparatus disclosed by Mazur et al.

CONCLUSION

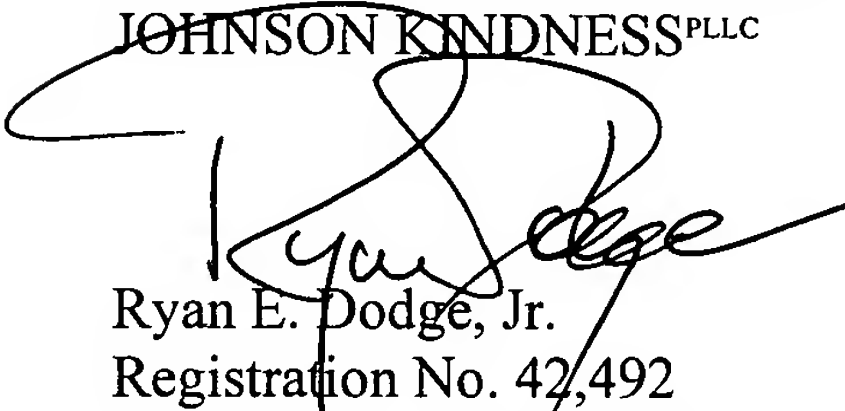
Claim 1 of the present application is canceled and rewritten in Jepson form, with more explicit limitations describing the missile shield assembly. All of the Examiner's objections regarding indefiniteness have been corrected. Additional claims, directed specifically to the missile shield assembly, have also been added. All of the claims are fully supported by the disclosure in the present application. Entry of the amendments and a favorable disposition are respectfully requested.

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The Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned directly if there are additional concerns regarding the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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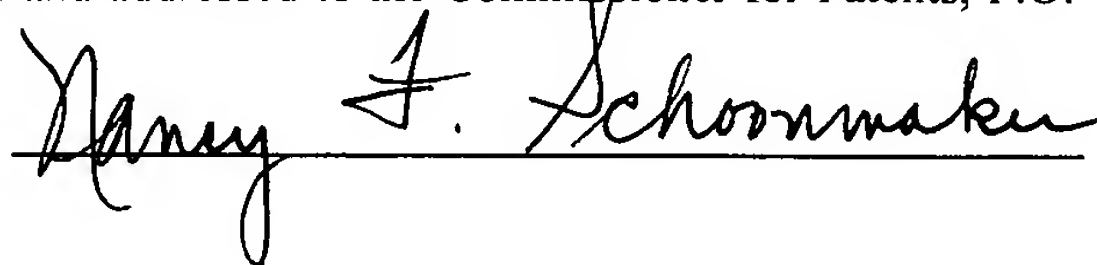


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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service in a sealed envelope as first class mail with postage thereon fully prepaid and addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the below date.

Date: March 24, 2004

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